THE faithful MINISTERS of CHRIST mindful of their own Death.

A

SERMON

Preached at the *Lecture* in *BOSTON*;

Upon the *Death* of the

LEARNED and VENERABLE

SOLOMON STODDARD

Late *Paſtor* of the Church of *CHRIST*

in *Northampton*:

Who departed this Life *Febr.* 11. 1729. *Ætat.* 86.

By *Benjamin Colman.*

Iſa. iii. 2. *The Prophet, and the Prudent, and the Ancient.*

BOSTON, New-England:

Printed for *D. Henchman* in Cornhil, *John Phillips* and *T. Hancock*, near the Town Dock.

MDCCXXIX.

THE faithful Ministers of CHRIST
rejoiceful of their own Death.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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Philippians, The Prophets, and the Martyrs, and the Ancient.

BOSTON, New-England:
Printed for B. Harbottle in Cornhill, 1729.

To the HONOURABLE

Simeon Stoddard, Esq.

SIR,

I SEND You the following *Sermon* at your Desire, however unworthy it is to bear the *Name* of your most Reverend and dear BROTHER, whom you have justly lov'd, honour'd and reverenc'd from your *Youth* up; for that singular *Gravity* and *Sanctity* which adorned Him in the sight of all Men; and for that great *Use* which it has pleas'd GOD to make of Him in his *Church* for these last sixty Years.

YOU are now Your self *old & gray-headed*, tho' You have not attained to the Days of the Years of your BROTHER; and are ‖ *waiting for the Consolation of a peaceful Dismission* after Him, as I ought to think of you: And I heartily pray that you may be growing *rich* in Grace, and *ripe* for Glory.

IT is an Honour to your *Posterity* that They have had an UNCLE of such Name and high Esteem in these Churches; and your worthy *Sons*, I am confident, do account Themselves honoured by GOD in the Relation they have stood to Him.

‖ Luke ii. 25, 29.

THOSE

THOSE things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in Him, *do: and the GOD of Peace ſhall be with You.*

AND now I joyn your *Mourning* with the bereaved *Flock & Family*, the *Eleƈt Relict and her Children*; *Whom* (I truſt we may ſay,) *we love in the Truth*; *Grace be with* Them, *Mercy and Peace.*

MAY the bleſſed *Comforter* be ever near to the Soul of his *aged Handmaid*, the few Days ſhe has to ſurvive: And may *a double Portion* of the GOOD SPIRIT which reſted on the *Deceaſed*, be inherited by his *honoured Sons*; that in the *Stations* which GOD has allotted them in his *Church* and in the *State*, they may be made great *Bleſſings* in their Generation.

WHEN I have alſo mourned with my *Fathers* and *Brethren*, the Miniſters of the bereaved *County*, and *Others* his Sons by Marriage; I ſhall add no more, but to entreat their *Prayers* and yours for *Me*, who am,

2 JY 61

SIR,

Your very humble Servant,

BOSTON,
Febr. 24. 1728,9.

Benja. Colman.

MINISTERS mindful of their own Death.

II. PETER i. 13, 14.

YEA I think it meet as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in Remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my Tabernacle, even as our LORD JESUS CHRIST *hath shewed me.*

THE Death of the aged, holy, venerable, *Apostolical Man of GOD*, SOLOMON STODDARD, for a long course of Years (thro' Grace) the faithful *Pastor* of the Church of CHRIST in *Northampton*, has led me to the *Words* read for the present *Lecture*.

I think it but a decent and dutiful Respect to his *Name* and Memory, (giving unto *Free Grace* the Glory of all that He was made to us and did among us) in this *Place* and *Lecture*, upon the first notice of his expected *Decease*, to mourn the common Bereavement of all our Churches. For as he has been for some

ſome Years the moſt *aged* Miniſter in the *Province*, ſo in the Courſe of a laborious, burning Miniſtry, he has for many Years ſhone before us in the Gifts and Graces of the HOLY SPIRIT; a *Prophet* and a *Father* not only to the neighbouring Churches and Paſtors of his own *County*, but alſo to thoſe of the whole *Land*.

AFTER thoſe in his own Neighbourhood, it may be his Name and Miniſtry were not more dear and honoured any where than in this great *Town*, the Place of his *Birth*; where both Miniſters and People receiv'd his *annual Viſits* with a peculiar Reverence and Pleaſure; as He made them to us (while his bodily Strength continued for ſo long a Journey, and this was to near his *Eightieth* Year) with all the Delight and Satisfaction that a FATHER has in viſiting the Children of his Love; bringing us the ſolemn Counſels and Warnings of GOD from Year to Year, which were received by Us in crowded Aſſemblies, that hung on his Lips, as a People that ſought Righteouſneſs and ſhewed much Love.

THEN it was that this Lecture was *His*, and he was as a PETER here among the Diſciples and Miniſters of our LORD JESUS; very much our *Primate*, and a *Prince* among us, in an Evangelical and the truly *Apoſtolical* ſenſe; that is to ſay, among the *Firſt* for Light and Integrity, for Knowledge and great Judgment, for Faith and Love which is in CHRIST JESUS, and for Zeal and Boldneſs in the Cauſe of Truth and Holineſs: But I muſt add, None leſs affecting a *Pre-eminence* above his Brethren; none more pleas'd with Retirement, and none more with public Appearances for occaſional Services to CHRIST and Souls; none more ſtudious and inquiſitive after Truth; none more diligent and laborious in his Studies; none more lively, fervent and unwearied in the Pulpit; nor did any one love his Work and his *Maſter* better.

No one in our Churches has run (thro' Grace) a longer, a brighter and a like conſtant Courſe of *Preaching* on LORD's-Days and Lectures, to the finiſhing

the

the *eighty fifth* Year of his Life; his LORD giving him a ſtrength of Body equal to that of his Soul, for ſuch a *Run* of Labour and Service; and therein a happy fruitful old Age; his Day and his Work ending together.

AND accordingly, No Miniſter in the Land liv'd more mindful of *Death*, his own and his People's Death; the firſt and laſt Character of a Miniſter of the *New-Teſtament*, ſtudious to ſave Himſelf and Them that hear him, and watching for Souls as One that muſt give an Account. And who among Men, for many a Year paſt, has enjoy'd a more ſetled *Peace*, and full Aſſurance of his Intereſt in CHRIST, than this Servant of the LORD did? whereby he liv'd above the Fear of Death, in a diligent Preparation for it, and in a pleaſing Expectation of it.

WHEREFORE no Miniſter in the Land, (I am bold to ſay it) for ſcores of Years paſt, could with greater Freedom and Pleaſure, Integrity and Truth, have taken to Himſelf *theſe Words* of the Apoſtle *Peter*, which I have choſen for his *Funeral*; and have ſaid to his Hearers in the Name and Fear of GOD, with all Humility and Confidence; --- "*To You that have obtained like precious Faith with us, through the Righteouſneſs of* GOD, *and our Saviour* JESUS CHRIST; --- *I will not be negligent to put you always in Remembrance, tho' ye know and be eſtabliſhed in the Truth: Yea I think it meet as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to ſtir you up by putting you in Remembrance; knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off this my Tabernacle, as our* LORD JESUS CHRIST *hath ſhewed me: Moreover, I will endeavour that after my Deceaſe you may be able to have theſe things always in Remembrance.*

WORDS very ſuitable from a *dying* Miniſter to *dying* Hearers. Words worthy of a dying *Apoſtle*. Now *theſe be the laſt Words of* PETER. He ſpeaks of his approaching *Diſſolution*; He ſpeaks of his *Body*, and calls it his *Tabernacle*; He ſpeaks of the *putting* off this his

Tabernacle; he *knew* that he *muſt* do it and that very *ſhortly*; He knew it by the Courſe of *Nature*, for he was now *old*; but he knew it more by what JESUS his *Lord* had *ſaid* to him concerning it: This he ever kept in Mind; this he here calls to Mind, and ſpeaks of it to quicken Himſelf, and to excite Thoſe to whom he wrote, to a careful and diligent Improvment of the few remaining Days before them, in a Preparation for Death and Eternity.

Now the *Truths* that are here preſented to us for our preſent Meditation; and ſerious Conſideration, are theſe,

1. THAT the *Body* of Man is the Souls *Tabernacle*.
2. THAT *we muſt ſhortly put off* this our Tabernacle.
3. THAT our LORD JESUS CHRIST *hath ſhewn us* that we muſt do ſo.
4. THAT the *Miniſters of Chriſt* muſt die as well as others.
5. THAT it is meet for *Them* as long as they are in the Body to *ſtir up* themſelves and their People, *by putting them in Remembrance of theſe things*.

I. THE *Body* of Man is the *Tabernacle* of the Soul. *This my Tabernacle.* As our LORD JESUS once pointed to his own ſacred Body, and ſaid, *This Temple.* HE was the *true Tabernacle*, which the LORD pitched, and not Man. His human Nature was ſo, for therein the SON OF GOD *tabernacled* with us. --- *Our* Bodies are the *ſmall, frail* and *movable* Dwellings of our Souls, of *mean* Materials, *eaſily* taken down, and to be *taken down* within a *little* time, and to be *ſet up again* to dwell in. We continue in them but a few days, and we leave but for a few more, to return into them again.

IF we conſider the Body of *Man* in its *original* Frame and *firſt* State; or if we conſider *our* Bodies in their *laſt and* Reſurrection State; they are *more* than Tabernacles. They were and are in *this* View of them the

the Building of God, a Houſe not made with Hands; made for Perpetuity; for Immortality, never to be taken down; but to be changed, made Spiritual and Incorruptible, and to be taken *up* to God, to be a part of his own Manſion and Palace in the heavenly Places.

Yet as the Body *now* is, it is wonderfully made, ſet up and kept up. Call it a *Tabernacle*; it is a fine and noble one in it ſelf; like that of *Moſes*, a work of great Deſign, and whereon much Art and Coſt and Care was beſtowed. Our Souls could neither provide this *Tent* for themſelves; nor can they now uphold, or preſerve it from falling, no not a Day. The Soul neither may nor can leave it at it's pleaſure, tho' it moves and removes it at it's Will; and often injures it by it's paſſions.

The Body ſhould be a Tabernacle for God to dwell in; for Him to be worſhip'd and ſerv'd in, both here and for ever.

If there is any thing now *mean* in it, we our ſelves have brought *that* upon it: We have made it *this Corruptible* falling thing, which it is now become. It was a fair and beauteous Houſe, as God fram'd and finiſh'd it; and will be ſo again, when he ſhall raiſe it again and reſtore it.

Let us *thank* God for this Dwelling. He made it for us, gave it to us, put us into it. Let us give Him the *Glory* of it: ‖ "*A Body haſt Thou prepared me! Thou art He that didſt take me out of the Womb! I will praiſe Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made!*"

Let us conſecrate the *Tent*, ſuch as it is, to God: He will accept the Dedication of it and dwell in it. He

‖ Heb. x. 5. Pſal. xxii. 9. cxxxix. 14.

made it for Himſelf at firſt, and he now requires us to give it back to Him, to uſe it for Him and ſerve Him in it. Let us ſupplicate Him to ſanctify us to Himſelf, that we may be Holy both in Body and Spirit; and that He may be glorified in both, for they are His, by every Right, of Creation, Redemption and daily Preſervation.

But while we are in theſe mortal Bodies, let us eſteem them as *no* more than our earthly Houſe and Tabernacle; our meaner and dying Part. Let us daily think of leaving this Houſe of Clay, expect to remove ſhortly out of it. If we wait a few days, *the Grave is our Houſe*; and *the Graves are ready for us* †. By Faith let us *ſojourn* here as in a ſtrange Land, dwelling in Tents, as the *Heirs* of Promiſe did of old. And content in our preſent Lot, let us be ſeeking a *better Country*; heavenly and everlaſting Habitations.

Finally, Who hurts or *miſuſes* his own Dwelling? Who is there but takes care of it and *repairs* it? and yet who ſets up a *Booth* and thinks of living *long* in it?

II. We *muſt ſhortly put off* this our Tabernacle, and we ſhou'd *know* that we muſt do ſo. The *phraſe* here ſeems not quite ſo proper: We ſpeak of *putting off* our Cloaths, but of *taking down* a Tabernacle, or of *going out* of it. But ſo it pleaſes the Holy Ghost to blend the *Metaphors*, in my Text and in other places *.

Death is the Souls' *putting off* the Body, as a Man puts off his *Clothes* at Night, after the Work of the Day, and lies down to Sleep. So *Aaron*'s putting off his Prieſtly *Robes*, was the Figure & Image of his following *Deceaſe*.

Again, Death is the Souls *removing* out of it's Dwelling of Fleſh. The Body is no longer habitable; it falls and moulders into duſt. As King *Hezekiah*

† Job xvii. 1, 13. Heb, xi. 9, 14. * 2 Cor. v. 4.

prayed

prayed at the Approach of Death, * " *My Age is removed as a Shepherd's Tent.*

SURELY *Jonadab* the Father of the *Rechabites*, ‡ who commanded his Poſterity not to build them Houſes, but all their Days to dwell in *Tents*; meant thereby to admoniſh them that their preſent Life in the *Body* was no other than as in a Tent and *Tabernacle*; and that in the wiſe Conſideration hereof they ſhould piouſly *paſs the Time of their ſojourning here in Fear.* And thus the *Rechabites* are an Image unto the Church for ever, of Men ſpiritually wiſe for their Souls and a better Life.

IN our *Text* there are *three* things ſaid about our *putting off* our Tabernacle; " that we *muſt* do it, that we muſt do it *ſhortly*, and that we *know* we muſt do ſo.

1. WE *muſt* do it: It is not left to our Choice, *if* we will, or *when*, or *how* it ſhall be. Death comes with his Commiſſion and Authority from GOD, and ſays to us, You *muſt* and ſhall go. His Call to us is, *Come away!* and with a ſtrong Hand he hales and turns us out. He pulls down the Tabernacle over our heads, and tears the Body in pieces, Pſal. 90. 3. *Thou turneſt Man to Deſtruction.* 104. 29. *Thou takeſt away their Breath, they die and return to their Duſt.* The *Loftineſs* of Man is bowed down, and the *Haughtineſs* of Man is laid low, in the Day of *Death.*

2. WE muſt die *ſhortly.* How ſoon or ſuddenly we know not; but we are ſure it will be ſhortly, " *Are not my Days few?* ‖ *Remember how ſhort my Time is! How long have I to live?* Are not my Days *as the Day of an Hireling? For what is your Life? it is even as a Vapour, that endureth but a little while, and*

* Iſa. xxxviii. 12. ‡ Jer. xxxv. 2. ‖ Job x. 20. xiv. 1. Pſal. lxxxix 47. Jam. iv. 14.

then

then vaniſhes away. So the † *Cloud* is conſumed by the Sun, or the Wind drives it away. So the *Graſs* flouriſheth in the Morning and is cut down at Even. So the *Poſt* by Land, and the ſwift *Ships* at Sea, and the *Eagle* in the Air, paſs away. And ſo the Weavers *Shuttle* paſſes in an Inſtant thro' the Loom. Next to this is *Nothing* at all; and ſuch is our Age before GOD; Pſal. 39. 5. *My Age is as nothing before Thee.* Thus the Scripture teaches us to think and ſpeak of the *ſhortneſs* of Human Life.

3. WE *know* that it is thus ſhort. *Knowing that I muſt ſhortly put off this my Tabernacle.* Who of us but *know* this, in one ſenſe? and yet how *few* of us may there be that know it, in another? and as we all ought to know it? Would to GOD we every one could ſay like *Peter*, that we *truly* know it! that we ſeriouſly conſider and realize it every Day we live!

FEW, very few among the dying Children of Men have a *real* Knowledge of *this* plain and common Truth. *The Living know that they ſhall Die*; but what then? how few among the Living *conſider* it, lay it to heart, keep it in mind, and *Live* as if they knew this? This is to *know* and underſtand in the Language of *Scripture* and of my *Text*.

THE *Apoſtle* liv'd and preach'd, and wrote and wrought according to this Knowledge; and ſo ſhall we act if *we underſtand this and conſider our latter End*: While the careleſs and inconſiderate are the *Ignorant* in the Language of *Scripture*, "*Who know not, nor underſtand, but walk on in Darkneſs*, Pſal. 82. 5.

IT is the ſanctifying Impreſſion of this known Truth upon our Minds and Conſciences, and the ruling Power of it over our Thoughts, Words and Actions, that becomes dying Creatures, who are haſtening to an eternal Judgment.

† Job vii. 9. Pſal. xc. 6, Job ix. 26. vii. 6.

THIS

THIS is the true and *saving* Knowledge of our own Mortality; which as it is GOD's Work in us and from his enlightning Spirit; so it is *Life Eternal* to us to have this Knowledge of *Death*, this wise & habitual Consideration of our dying State.

WE all *lack* this Wisdom, and we should *ask* it of GOD; * " *Lord make me to know my End and the measure of my Days; that I may know how frail I am.* We must be *made* to know it, we are *hardly* brought to know it, our foolish earthly Hearts are very averse to the serious Consideration of Death and Eternity; to meditate and pray over this Truth, " That we must shortly die.

HE that has learn'd this *first* Lesson, is *taught* of GOD. Psal. 90. 12. *So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.* We can't infuse this spiritual Wisdom into our selves or ours. Yet we may go to GOD for it, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. He *wishes* us this understanding Heart, Deut. 32. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this; that they would consider their latter End!* Let us fall in with this blessed *Wish* of GOD for us, and turn it into a PRAYER to Him; " *O that we were wise, to consider this!* And that we may know *this* savingly, or be left for ever Inexcusable in our Forgetfulness and Inconsideration, I come to the *third* Head,

III. THAT *our* LORD JESUS CHRIST *has shewn us this*, " that we must shortly put off our Tabernacle. Knowing that I must, *even as our* LORD JESUS CHRIST *hath shewed me.*

I shall here consider, *first*, the very particular and extraordinary *Revelation* that CHRIST had made to *Peter* respecting the *Time* and *Manner* of his Death.

* Psal. xxxix. 4.

To

To *that* the Apoſtle refers in my *Text*, namely, to the Words of the riſen JESUS to him, John 21. 18,19. *Signifying to him by what Death he ſhould glorify God: That when he ſhould be old he ſhould ſtretch forth his Hands to be bound for it.* So that the LORD had let him *know* "that he ſhould live to be *old*," that he ſhould die a *violent* Death, and "that he ſhould *willingly go to his Martyrdom.* And now ſee in my *Text* the accompliſhment of theſe Things drawing on. The *aged* Apoſtle ſpeaks his own *Readineſs*, Courage and Conſtancy in his Expectation of this predicted Death. He was now *old*, and ready to *reach out* his Hands unto them that ſhould *bind* him for Death. *Knowing* (ſays he) *that I muſt ſhortly put off my Tabernacle*: He ſpeaks as one ready and willing to go, whenever the LORD ſhould pleaſe.

HERETOFORE *Peter* had not been the moſt *patient* at the Thot's of Sufferings, and of an ignominous and cruel Death in particular. He of all the Diſciples was once the *leaſt likely* to *ſtretch* forth his hands for another to *gird* him. When CHRIST ſpake firſt of his own Crucifixion, *Peter* could not bear it; "LORD (ſaid he) *this ſhall not be.* When he ſaw the rude *Guards* lay hold on his LORD, he drew and wounded *Malchus.* When he ſaw himſelf like to be *ſeized* and arraigned, he thrice *denied* CHRIST. Theſe things did not at all look as if he hereafter ſhould be the Man, who when he ſhould be old ſhould go freely, meekly and reſignedly to a *Croſs* for the Name of CHRIST. Yet CHRIST told him all *this* in the Preſence of his Brethren, to put Honour upon him after his Fall, and to comfort him in his Sorrow for it, and to encourage him in his Self-diffidence, Humility and Fear. And by the Words of my *Text* we ſee that. He remembers with Pleaſure what CHRIST had ſaid to him of putting off his Tabernacle, and was looking out for the Day.

Now it is true that none of *us* have any ſuch particular Revelation made to us, concerning the Time and Manner of our Death. Never the leſs it is moſt true

true and certain, as to every one of us, " That CHRIST has many a Time, and in many Ways, ſhewn to *us* that *we* muſt ſhortly put off *our* Tabernacle.

AND as it may be very *profitable* to us to conſider this, ſo it ſhould be a *pleaſant* Meditation to us; For every Notice to us of this Nature from the LORD JESUS ſhould be taken *in Love* as it is ſurely meant. For in the Face of CHRIST crucified, and from the Mouth of CHRIST riſen and aſcended, we ſee and hear of Mortality and Death in ſuch a Light and Power, as nothing elſe can ſhow it in.

BUT How and Wherein has our LORD JESUS ſhewn *us* that *we* muſt ſhortly put off theſe *our* Tabernacles.

Briefly thus: HE has ſhewn it to us in the *firſt Adam.* And if he had not ſhewn us the *Origine* of Death and Evil, it had been yet unknown to us. He has ſhewn us ||, how *in Adam all die*, how *by one Man ſin enter'd into the World and Death by ſin, and has paſſed on all, becauſe all are Sinners.* He that opens the *Book* of GOD and the *Seals* thereof, has in the firſt *Page* of it open'd to us the *Gates of Death*, and ſhewn the Beginning and the End thereof *.

Again, THE LORD JESUS has ſhewn us *in Himſelf*, in his own *Dying*, that *we* muſt ſhortly put off our Tabernacle. With *his dead Body* all his Saints go down to the Duſt, and like His their *Fleſh reſts in Hope* †. This is that ſight of Death which takes away the *Sting* of it, and delivers from the Fear of *Bondage*. *Come ſee the Place where the LORD lay*, and prepare to follow Him thro' the dark Valley, and into the Chambers of Death ‡.

|| 1 Cor xv. 22. Rom. v. 12. * Job xxxviii. 17. Rev. i. 2. † Iſa. xxvi. 19. Pſal. xvi. 9. ‡ Mat. xxviii. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 56. Heb. ii. 15.

Again, He (*the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World*) did from the Beginning ſhow his People that they muſt die, *in the Sacrifices and Offerings* out of the Flocks and Herds; even from the Day of *Abel*. In the Blood of Theſe *Adam* had the firſt Sight of Death; and they were *Notices* to him that he himſelf muſt die, as well as *Figures* of the Death of CHRIST the great Sacrifice. Thus Man convers'd with *Death* in all the *Worſhip* that he offer'd to GOD from the Day of his Fall. Death ſtar'd him in the face as often as he came to Gods *Altar*, and the LORD ſhewed him that he muſt ſhortly *die*, in the *bleeding* Figures of his own Death. *Death* was the *Cry* at the Door of the Tabernacle and Temple, in the Blood of the Sacrifices, thro' all the Days of the *Old Teſtament*: As it is yet in the Churches of CHRIST, and at his *Table*, in the Memorials of his *Death*, thro' the Days of the *New Teſtament*.

IN the *Sacraments* of Chriſtianity, we remember in ſolemn Form *the Dying of the* LORD JESUS, and are awfully minded of our *own* approching change. The Table of CHRIST, where we ſhow forth His Death till He come, is to *put* us always in Remembrance of the preſent Truth, (as my *Context* ſpeaks) and to *ſtir* us up to the Conſideration of it, "That within a little time He comes, as to every one of us, and we muſt ſhortly appear before Him to give an Account, how we have remembred *his* Dying, and how *our* own, and got *ready* for his Coming. "Did I not warn you, may the LORD then ſay, as often as you went to my Houſe and Table, of your dying ſhortly, and of your appearing before my Judgment Seat? was it not openly *ſhewn* you in the *Memorials* of my own Death?

THUS again, In every *Sermon* preached to us on the Subject of Death, whether the dying Creature will hear or whether he will forbear, CHRIST ſends him Line upon Line concerning his paſſing hence, to his eternal Judgment. From Sabbath to Sabbath this harſh String is grated on, and the unwilling Mortal is made to hear it. O it is CHRIST that ſpeaks to us by his Word

Word and Spirit, and ſhews us that we muſt die, we know not how ſoon or ſuddenly; and what a great thing it is to ſet our Souls in Order againſt that dreadful Hour! That the ſecond Death may have no power over us! That we may never be hurt of it! That this laſt Enemy may be ſlain before us! And that to die may be our Gain, infinite and eternal Gain!

So in all the *Records* of the Death of Saints and Sinners, from the Death of *Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham* and *Moſes*, to the Death of *Peter* and *John*, the LORD has ſhewn his People, from Generation to Generation, that they muſt ſhortly die. *Your Fathers where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?* And who art Thou, O Man! whoſe *inward Tho't is, that thy Houſe ſhall continue for ever? and thy Dwelling-place to all Generations?*

Moreover, IN the Deaths and *Funerals* of our Relations and Friends, from Week to Week, CHRIST ſhews us that we alſo muſt ſhortly die. We may ſee our LORD at every Funeral with the *Keys of Hades* in his Hand ‖. He *kills* and he ſaves *alive*; and none can deliver out of his Hand. *The* FATHER *judges no Man, but has committed* this *Judgment to the* SON. If *He* will that *Peter* be bound and die, and that *John* tarry till he come; what is it to the reſt of the Diſciples? *He* alſo has determined by what Death every Believer ſhall glorify GOD. The Kingdom of Providence is *His*, and the two great Things in it are *Life* & *Death*.

IT is therefore our LORD *JESUS* who ſhews us we muſt ſhortly die, in all thoſe bodily *Infirmities*, *Pains* & *Sickneſſes*, which we feel within ourſelves daily, and which are the *Symptoms* of Death upon us; and as we advance in Years the *Shadows* of it lengthen upon us. 'Tis an inſtructive *Fable* that you have read, "How a certain Man made an Agreement with Death,

‖ Rev. i 18. Deut. xxxii 39. John v. 22.

that he ſhould kindly give him ſome *Notice* & Warning of his Coming; and when Death afterward came upon him ſuddenly, the trembling Man pleaded his *Promiſe*; "Did you not agree to give me Notice of your Coming? Yes, anſwered the grim *Officer*, and ſo I did often, but you would not mind me: Did I not at ſuch a Time warn you by ſuch a Faintneſs? and again at ſuch a Time by ſuch a Pain? and yet again at other Times by theſe and thoſe Fits of Sickneſs? Theſe were the kind Notices of my Coming; and now Come away!

But in the laſt place, and in the *beſt* Senſe of all, Christ ſhows unto his *own* Diſciples, as he did to *Peter*, that they muſt ſhortly put off their Tabernacle, *by the effectual Impreſſions of his Grace, and by the Teaching of his* Spirit. He ſavingly enlightned *Peter*, and ſo he doth all his Elect, in the *Truth* before us; whereby they are inclined and made to live in a ſerious and diligent Preparation for Death, Judgment and Eternity. So he makes them wiſe for their Souls, wiſe unto Salvation. He ſhows them their dying State in a powerful and *ruling Light*. This is for Christ *to ſhow*, and *for us to know*: As it is written, *All thy Children ſhall be taught of GOD*.

Let our Souls apply to Christ by fervent Prayer, "*Lord JESUS*, Be Thou my *Teacher* in this great and neceſſary Leſſon! In thy *Light* ſhew me my mortal dying State.

O let us gladly learn of *Him*, who is the Teacher come from God! learn *this* of Him, which is the *End of all Men*! Learn it from his *Word*, learn it from his *Life*, learn it from his *Miniſters*, learn it in his *Ordinances*, learn it at his *Table*, where *Death* is ſet forth evidently before our Eyes; learn it every *Sabbath* and at every *Sacrament*, being early at the *Sepulchre* every Lord's-Day; and finally, learn it of the bleſſed enlightning and ſanctifying Spirit of Christ, for none teacheth like Him, none effectually beſides Him.

YOUR *Miniſters* labour to ſhew you this plaineſt Truth in a convincing Light: They think it meet, as *Peter* did, as long as you are with them in this Tabernacle to *ſtir* you up, by putting you in Remembrance of it: They would endeavour that after their *Deceaſe* you may have theſe things always in Remembrance: To this End the Ordinances of CHRIST are graciouſly ordained, wiſely adapted, and to be diligently uſed: But O my *Brethren*, look off from dying *Miniſters*, and look above all preſent *Means* of Grace, to the crucified riſen JESUS at the right Hand of GOD! Look to Him for his HOLY SPIRIT, ſavingly to ſhow you your dying State, and help you to live in the due Apprehenſion of it.

HAPPY the Miniſters, & happy the People, who learn this of the FATHER and CHRIST! Let us do it before we die! for there is no Knowledge or Work in the Grave whither we are going.

BUT has the *Lord* JESUS ſhown us that we muſt ſhortly *put off* theſe our Tabernacles? So has He alſo ſhewn us, That we muſt *put them on* again ‖. He has told us, That there ſhall be a *Reſurrection* of the Dead, both of the Juſt and Unjuſt; That *all* that are in their Graves ſhall hear his Voice and come forth; That of all whom the Father has given Him he will loſe none, but will *raiſe* them up at the laſt Day; That He himſelf is riſen the *Fruit-fruits* of them that ſleep; That as in *Adam* all die, ſo in *Him* they ſhall be made alive; That this *Corruptible* muſt put on Incorruption, and this *Mortal* muſt put on Immortality; and that then ſhall be bro't paſs the ſaying; "*Death is ſwallowed up in Victory.* Thus He that has told us of putting *off* the Body, has not *left his holy Ones* in Corruption, but has *bro't Life and Immortality* to light unto them.

‖ Acts xxiv. 15. John v. 28 vi. 39, 40 44. 1 Cor xv. 20, 23, *&c.*

BUT

BUT it is time I come to the *Fourth* Head.

IV. THE *Miniſters of* CHRIST *know*, and they *ought* to know, it concerns *Them* to know as it does their *Hearers*, and the *Lord* JESUS has ſhewn to *them* in particular, that *They* as well as others muſt ſhortly put off *their* Tabernacles.

IT was PETER, the *Apoſtle* of JESUS CHRIST, who knew that *He* was ſoon to die, as his LORD had ſhewn him. And *every* Miniſter of CHRIST knows the ſame thing reſpecting himſelf, and ſhould *take* to himſelf theſe very Words and ſay, "*I* know that *I* muſt ſhortly put off *this my* Tabernacle; my LORD has ſhewed *me* this.

DEATH knows *no* Diſtinction, Degree, Order or Character of Men; has no reſpect to Perſons. But of *all* Orders, that of the ſacred *Miniſtry* ſhould *moſt* know and conſider their Mortal ſtate, and *live* according to the Knowledge of it. ---- They know no more the Day of their Death than other Men, nor the Manner of it. They are as frail and mouldring Duſt, as any of the Lords Congregation. They alſo are formed out of the *Clay*, and returning into it, tho' they are in GODS *ſtead* to corruptible Men, bringing the Lords Meſſages *.

IT is meet for dying People to have *dying* Teachers; very meet that they who preach to others of Death and Eternity, be dying Perſons, and do it firſt to Themſelves; ſenſible that they are going into the ſame Grave, and to the ſame eternal World with their Hearers.

OF all the Prophets, only *Enoch* and *Elias* ſaw not Death. *Aaron* died in the ſight of all the Congregation. And we read of *Eliſha*'s Death, tho' he inherited a double Portion of the Spirit of *Elias*. His dying too was honour'd with *Miracles* and the Mourning of *Kings* and of the *Schools*.

*Job xxxiii 6.

MINISTERS die *Young* like other Men; and in the midſt of Uſefulneſs, Labours and Fruitfulneſs; They live to *old Age* alſo, are grey in their Lords Work, and worn out in the Service of Souls. Sometimes they *out-live* their Work, and their Powers for Service are *gone* before they put off their Tabernacles. Or they die with all their Powers, vigorous and *active* in them; in the midſt of their *Projections* for the Service of CHRIST and Souls: *In that very Day their* princely *Tho'ts periſh.* Yea they have died in the *Pulpit*, or been led from it to their dying Bed.

THEY die of the ſame *Diſeaſes* that others do: of Fevers or Dropſies, by Languiſhings and Conſumptions, or by Apoplexies and ſudden Suffocations: They die of Stupors, or Strangury, of dolorous Cancers (and that even in the *Tongue*, as did a late excellent Miniſter in *London*): They die of noiſome and ulcerous Diſeaſes as well as others; their Fleſh *broken and become loathſome* before it is put off; their body *vile* to an Eye of ſenſe: They die by evil *Accidents*, as we call 'em, by broken Bones, by Drowning, by Beaſts of Prey; (as the *old Prophet*) or by the hands of Robbers and Enemies, or by Violence and Injuſtice under the Name and Form of Law. They are *in trouble as other Men, and plagued like other Men*; and (like *Peter*) *have Bands in their Death.* ---- How many of Chriſts faithful and eminent Miniſters have died *Martyrs* for his Name and Truth? Since the Death of *Stephen*, and *James* and *Peter*. GOD has (according to his Sovereign Will) *ſet them forth appointed to Death, a Spectacle to the World, to Angels and Men.* But if they live and die at *Home*, in Eaſe and on their Beds; die af Age and in Honour, with their Children and Friends about them; beloved, deſir'd and pray'd for by their People; and mourn'd for when they can continue no longer, but *go from the Place of the Holy*, This alſo is like other worthy Worſhippers.

MINISTERS *know* all this concerning Themſelves, and ſo do all about them; and it is by no means to *inform* but

but to *affect* my ſelf and you, that I have ſaid ſo much about it. And to affect our ſelves the more, Why ſhould I not add, "That Miniſters are *Sinners* like other Men, and ſhould be *Examples* to their Flocks of holy Dying, and are but herein *conformed to* CHRIST, like his other Members. Nay are not their Sins *greater* than other Mens? And ſhall they not then ſuffer the *Pains* of Death as well as others? Or if CHRIST has *taſted* Death for Them, among the Church of his Elect, ſhall not they alſo *drink of his Cup? and be baptiſed with his Baptiſm?* And the rather, if like the *two Brethren* they hope to be *nearer* to Him than Others, in his *Kingdom* and Glory. I ſay again, Why ſhould they not go before their Flocks in *holy Dying* as well as Living? *To hear about the Dying of the Lord* JESUS while they *live* *; and (by his Grace) to exhibit it when they come to *die*; that HE may be *magnified* (and Souls edified) *in their mortal Bodies; Whether it be in Life or Death* ||.

FOR theſe *Reaſons* Miniſters die, and ſhould die, like other Men. They *know* it, and have nothing to ſay againſt it. And they *need* and *ought* to know it practically, lay it to their Heart and live accordingly; as much, if not more than Others. PETER had the *Primacy* in this reſpect, among the *Brethren* to whom he wrote; tho' not among the *Apoſtles*. In this let *Miniſters* learn of Him, and be Followers of him, as he was of CHRIST.

WOULD to GOD it could be truly ſaid of all the *Miniſters of* JESUS, that *they* have a ſaving Knowledge of *this* plain Truth, which they preach to Themſelves and Others from day to day! How happy were it for *Paſtors* and *Flocks* together! if this *firſt* and ſmall Principle in the *Oracles* of GOD, known to every *Babe* in the Church, were but indeed fully learn'd by the *Doctors* in it? *Art thou a Maſter in Iſrael, and*

* 2 Cor. iv. 7. || Phil. i. 20.

knoweſt

knoweſt not this? But O 'tis a great and chief and *firſt* thing indeed! and happy is *He* that has learn'd it as he ought to know it! It is the Power of GOD unto the Salvation both of *Preacher* and *Hearer*. We may ſtudy the *Point*, preach it, and urge it on our Selves and others, and yet not have learn'd it.

BUT who are ſo *obliged*, bound and advantaged to conſider duely of, and live by the Knowledge of their own Mortality, as the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel? Who are more call'd to *converſe* with Death, and to look into Eternity than they are? How often are *they* at the ſick and dying Beds of People, to the moſt ſolemn Ends and Purpoſes; to miniſter to their Souls, to enquire into their Spiritual State to aſſiſt them and pray over them in the Agonies of Death? and to follow their Remains, among the Mourners, to the Grave!

WHO ſhould know and underſtand their own Mortality, if not *they* who are ſo often call'd to *preach* upon the dark and melancholly Subject? and to lead others into the ſerious Contemplation of it, in all its Weight, Importance and awful Conſequence? To whom ſhould the Day of Death and Judgment be more *awful*, or more *joyful* than to the Miniſters of Chriſt? Who have a greater *Account* than they to give? How glorious a *Prophets Reward*, if they find Mercy to be faithful! but how dreadful the great and *terrible Day* to Them, if otherwiſe!

HOW then ought *Miniſters*, above all Men, to know, conſider and lay to heart their frail and dying State? the Greatneſs of their Work, the Shortneſs of their Time, and the Account they have to give? *They* are the Men, who above any ſhould have Death and Eternity always in their Eye, ever upon their Heart, and be able to ſay with the Apoſtle, "*I die Daily*! And who ſhould urge themſelves on in their Work with his *Motives* ||,

|| 1 Cor. xv. 31. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Cor. ix. 27. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

"*That I may give up my Account with Joy and not with Grief!* And *leſt after I have preached unto Others, I my ſelf ſhould prove the Caſt-away* ! And again, "*That I may both ſave my ſelf and them that hear me!* ---- How ſhould we *feel* the Power and Force of ſuch Words, as they paſs thro' our Minds, and come from our Lips ?

And it is to be charitably *ſuppoſed* of the Miniſters of Religion, that as *many* of them, and far *more* in Proportion of this *Order* than of any other, have the *ſaving* Knowledge of the Truth before us; or elſe *Woe* unto their Souls, and to the Churches of Christ for their ſakes. This doth in a ſpecial manner agree to their holy and ſpiritual Calling, to their peculiar Bonds and Ordination Vows, and to their high Profeſſion. And this is the Way for them to be bleſſed by God and made ſucceſsful in their Work: As *Moſes* prayed for, and propheſied concerning the Tribe of *Levi*, and bleſſed them with his dying Lips; Deut. 33. 8. *Let thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy Holy One.* Which was to ſay, "Let God furniſh them with thoſe Gifts and Graces, that Light and Integrity, that Illumination and Sanctification, which are requiſite to the faithful Diſcharge of the Duties of their high and ſacred Office. And ſo *Aaron* was illuminated, living in a Preparation to *undreſs* and die, at a Day or an *Hours* warning. And this is a ſhining part in the Character of bleſſed *Paul*; as he tells the *Corinthians* that by Death working in *him*, Life ſpiritual and eternal was the more convey'd to *them* thro' his Miniſtry; he being the more quickned from day to day in ſerving their Souls, by the daily Views he had of his own Dying: Which I take to be the ſenſe of thoſe Words, 2 Cor. 4. 12. "*So then Death worketh in us, but Life in you*". For, the more a lively Apprehenſion of *Death* and Eternity works in the *Miniſters of* Christ, ſo much the more like are they to be inſtrumental to the ſpiritual *Life* of their People. And who in fact are like laborious, and it may be ſucceſsful, in their Miniſtry, as thoſe that live moſt in the Views of Eternity? As I remember that the

the Venerable Mr. *Baxter* in his Age, reflected with pleaſure on the Goodneſs of God to Him thro' his life, that by a weak and dying ſtate of Body he had been kept ſtudying, praying and preaching like a dying Man for thirty Years together.

O the Comfort and Pleaſure to a Miniſter in *Age*, or to any Chriſtian, that can thus look back on a Life ſpent in *the Knowledge of Death*, and a diligent Preparation for it. With what Calm and Peace may ſuch a Servant of CHRIST take leave of his Brethren, as the Apoſtle *Paul* did of the *Elders* about *Epheſus*? *Act.* 20. Yea how *triumphantly* may he ſpeak of and meet his advancing Change in the Words of the ſame *Apoſtle* to *Timothy*; 2. Epiſt. 4. Chap. 6, 7, 8. *I am ready to be offered, and the Time of my Departure is at hand; I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my Courſe, I have kept the Faith; Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the righteous Judge will give me at that Day; and not to me only, but to all* (both Miniſters and People) *that love and look for his appearing.*

BRETHREN, *Pray for us*, your unworthy Miniſters, that for the honour of CHRIST, and the ſake of our own and your Souls together, We may be help'd of GOD (and you with us) to live looking into our Graves, and mindful of the things that are unſeen and eternal. This is the Way to be labouring Miniſters, and fruitful Chriſtians.

LOOK on us, *my Brethren*, as poor frail *dying Preachers*, paſſing with you into an awful Eternity: And GOD help *Us* to look on You with the ſame Eye. If there be any *Treaſure* put into us, for the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, it is at beſt but in a brittle *earthen Veſſel*, that will be broken within a few days, and the *Desks* and *Seats* that now know us, ſhall know us no more.

HOW ſhould we therefore *pray* and *preach* and *hear* as Perſons on the Brink of Eternity! And how much

better ſhould the moſt of us Worſhip from time to time, if we were more under the Power of this juſt and awful *View* of our ſelves !

LET us now *every One*, both Speaker and Hearer, lay his hand upon his own Breaſt, and ſay to *Himſelf* in the Preſence and Fear of the Great GOD, " *I know that ſhortly I muſt put off this MY Tabernacle* ! My LORD has ſhewed *me* this a thouſand times over ! But O my *Soul*, Haſt thou ſaid it to thy *Self* daily, as becomes thy uncertain and dying State ? ---- It is a very ſerious and important thing, and I leave it to every ones Conſcience.

AND now I ſeem to have prevented my ſelf, in what I might have deſign'd to ſay on the laſt *Propoſition*, " That it is *meet* for the Miniſters of CHRIST, as *long* as they are in the Body, to *ſtir up* Themſelves and their People, by putting them *in Remembrance* of theſe Things; and to endeavour that *after their Deceaſe* they may have them always in Remembrance.

YOU will pleaſe to accept and improve the preſent *Diſcourſe*, as meant by the Will of GOD for *this* End.

AND I wiſh it were at all *Worthy* to bring to your Remembrance, with a deſerved Reſpect and Reverence, the Perſon and Miniſtry of that honoured and beloved *Servant* of CHRIST ; to whoſe Memory and your Spiritual Profit it is a ſmall Tribute.

YOU have ſeen the main *Deſign* and Scope of his powerful and ſucceſsful *Miniſtry*, with the bleſſed Fruit and *Crown* of it, in the Things that I have ſaid ; *What* He reap'd from it himſelf, and with pleaſure ſaw others reap.

THRO' Grace He was *not negligent*, to put all unto whom he came in Remembrance of the great Concerns of their Souls and the eternal World. *As long as he was in this Tabernacle*, (and how *long* was that thro' the Favour of GOD to us, how did he *ſtir up* Himſelf and

and all that heard him, in his pungent and awakning *Diſcourſes*, as *knowing* that he muſt ſhortly give an Account to GOD, and thoſe that heard him, together with him. And now *after* his Deceaſe, *We* ſhould have theſe things always in Remembrance, as we can bear Witneſs for him he earneſtly endeavour'd, while he was with us and came to us in the Name of the LORD. Let *his Death* bring to our Remembrance, and fix deep in our Hearts all that we have ſeen and heard, of the Power of Godlineſs in his teaching Life and Miniſtry.

As the aged *Apoſtle* wrote to his Son *Timothy*, ſo the ſurviving *Miniſtry* of the Land may repreſent the *Deceaſed* yet ſpeaking to them; "*Thou haſt fully known my Doctrine, manner of Life, Purpoſe, Faith, Long-ſuffering, Charity, Patience: Continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned & haſt been aſſured of.*

THE *Crown* of Life is to finiſh well, in a *happy Death*. And the way to *this* is to paſs our Days here under the governing Tho'ts of Death and *Eternity*.

WE muſt *congratulate* with the wiſe and faithful Servant that Lives and finiſhes thus; as the Spectators in the *Olympic Games* ſhouted him that carried off the Prize.

THE laſt *Character* of a Goſpel Miniſter is Sanctity and Fidelity in his LORD's Work, in the diligent Improvement of many Talents, and the gaining of many more thereby.

THE Gifts and Powers, natural and acquired, of an active Soul in a ſound Body, are a rich Endowment; the *Student*, the *Diſputant*, the *Caſuiſt*, and the powerful *Preacher*, are great and good lines in the pourtraiture of a compleat *Divine*: But yet theſe are the *leaſt* part in the *juſt Character* which the Public has had to day of the *Deceaſed*: "*The holy Man of GOD, and the diligent, compaſſionate and faithful Paſtor*" are much bolder and brighter Lines in his heavenly and

and angelical Face. So among the worthy *Remains* of his Learning and Miniſtry in Print, the *Mantle* he has left to us, his || *Safety of appearing in the Righteouſneſs of* CHRIST outſhines all the reſt. By Faith in *that* glorious Righteouſneſs, he has lived and died here below; and in *it* he now appears, in *Safety* and Glory, before the Throne of GOD.

LET the Miniſters of CHRIST, elder and younger, now preſent before the LORD, learn from the holy Life and happy Death of this our *Father*, how to *fulfil* our Miniſtry. Let us to this End live more than ever in the conſtant Remembrance of the *Mortality* & *Immortality* of our ſelves and others. We *need* more than any Men to do ſo, we are more *obliged* to it than others, we are more *advantaged* for it and *admoniſhed* of it than others; and it may turn to the Salvation of *Many*. It will greatly adorn us, inrich us, and make us uſeful, yield us *preſent* Comfort and a far exceeding *eternal Weight of Glory*.

AND not only let *elder* Miniſters be quickened in their Work by conſidering *that they muſt die very ſhortly*; but *younger* Miniſters alſo ſhould be as much ſtirred up by the ſame *Motive*, knowing that They *may* die before their *Elders*: And therefore while they emulate their Gifts, Labours and Uſefulneſs, let them not count upon attaining *the Days of the Years of their Pilgrimage*; but let them *begin* earneſtly, that they may make good Proficiency and do much Work in a little Time, ſuppoſing their Days ſhould be ſoon numbered and finiſhed by the Sovereign GOD.

YOU have learn'd of the renowned *Eliſha*, to look up after our *aſcended Fathers*, and cry to their GOD for a double Portion of the ſame SPIRIT to reſt on You, that you may tread in their Steps: And if like Them that are gone before you, you deſire to *excel* in Grace,

|| Which is now again in the Preſs,

in

in Knowledge, in Learning, in Labours & Uſefulneſs; to live in Honor and Eſteem among the People of GOD, and in inward Peace and Comfort; take this ſhort *Courſe* for it, "Live tho'tful of Death, and in a careful Preparation for a bleſſed Eternity.

LET our *Candidates* for the Evangelical Miniſtry *begin* here, and *go on* with this, in all their *Preparations* for it, and in their ſolemn *Entrance* on it. Lay this good *Foundation* deep, and build ſtrong for Eternity.

THIS will make you diligent in your Studies, to give your ſelves to Reading & Meditation; redeeming your Time: And *this* will make you pray over your Studies, and preach your Sermons firſt to your ſelves.

To have done, This wiſe and conſcientious Tho'tfulneſs of *Death*, and theſe habitual Preparations for it, will incline and excite us in our whole public Miniſtry, and in all our more private Applications to Souls, to act as dying Men with dying People. And this is the Way to live above the *Fear* of Death now, and to attain a *Prophets Reward* at the End of a few Days: *When they that are Wiſe ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs as the Stars for ever and ever* *. This is the way to attain the triumphant *Knowledge* and Aſſurance of many a *primitive* SAINT; † *For we know, that if our earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a Building of GOD, a Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

* Dan. xii. 3. † 2 Cor. v. 1.

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APPENDIX.

From the *BOSTON Weekly News-Letter*: No. 112.

Northampton, Feb. 13. 1728,9.

ON the 11th Inſtant died, and this Day was buried here, the very reverend and aged, our honoured and beloved Paſtor, Mr. *Solomon Stoddard*; too eminent a Perſon to be ſuffer'd to ſlip into his Grave in ſilence.

He was born at *Boſton*, Anno 1643. The eldeſt Son of *Anthony Stoddard* Eſq; by his ſecond Wife, who was the Sifter of Sir *George Downing*. Had his School Learning at *Cambridge*, under the famous *Maſter Corlet*. Took his firſt Degree at *Harvard College* Anno 1662. And was afterwards one of the Fellows of that Houſe. Growing out of Health by reaſon of too cloſe an Application to his Studies, he was prevail'd on to take a Voyage to *Barbados*, with Governor *Serle* as his Chaplain, where he preach'd to the Diſſenters in that Iſland. But his State of Health growing better, he return'd to his Native Country in about two Years.

Upon the Death of the excellent Mr. *Eleazer Mather*, the firſt Paſtor of the Church in this Place, who died when but 35 Years of Age, Mr. *Stoddard* was choſen and invited to ſucceed him. He was ordain'd to the Paſtoral Office over us, Anno 1672; and we have injoy'd an uncommon Bleſſing in him, for 56 Years together.

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His natural Powers were quick and ſtrong, and by the Bleſſing of God on his hard Studies, he was furniſh'd with that Learning which is requiſite to make a Divine of the firſt Rank. He was well skill'd in the learned Languages; well vers'd in the religious Controverſies that relate either to Points of Doctrine or Church-Government; and was himſelf a ready and ſmart *Diſputant*, a wiſe and judicious *Caſuiſt*, whoſe Advice and Counſel were much ſought and valu'd by the perplex'd and ſcrupulous.

As a *Paſtor* he was diligent, laborious, conſtant; wiſe, faithful, compaſſionate. His Sermons were plain and powerful, experimental and ſpiritual, cloſe and ſearching, yet rational and argumentative. His Subjects chiefly ſuited to awaken ſecure Sinners, direct Souls about the great Work of Converſion, and to help Perſons to judge of their ſpiritual State. And he was favour'd with a more than ordinary Preſence of God in his Work, and many Seals of his Miniſtry; in the Courſe of which there were three remarkable Seaſons, in which the Spirit of God ſo mov'd upon the Hearts of his People, that it became almoſt the general Cry of the Place, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* And Converts were ſo numerous, as to give a happy Occaſion for that admiring Queſtion, *Who are theſe that flie as a Cloud, and as the Doves to their Windows?*

He was a Man zealous againſt Sin, a hearty Mourner for the iniquities of the Times, an earneſt Pleader with God for the Land, the Nation, and His Church in the World.

The moſt in the Town have been born & bro't up under his Miniſtry; and ſcarce any Miniſter was more reverenc'd and belov'd by his People.

His Station was indeed in a remote Corner of the Land, but his Light and Influence went out thro' the whole Country; and *His* being our Paſtor gave a Name and Reputation to the Town.

He us'd for many Years together to make his Annual Viſits to *Boſton* at the time of the Commencement; and the Day after to preach the *Public Lecture*, to a numerous Audience, expecting and glad to hear him.

His Labours and Uſefulneſs were drawn out to an uncommon length. For *fifty* Years, or more, he preached twice every Lord's day; and till his 86th Year (in which he died) he was a conſtant Preacher one Part of the Lord's-days, and at a monthly-Lecture without the uſe of Notes at all; and, in the Opinion of ſome good Judges, ſo well, that it could not be diſcern'd his Powers were much abated. And ſo cloſe did he follow his Studies, even in this advanced Age, that when he died he had a conſiderable Number of Sermons ſtudied, that were never preach'd.

He injoy'd a great meaſure of Health, and was ſeldom taken off from his beloved Work by Sickneſs. His Stature was ſomething taller then the common Size, his Countenance comely, his Preſence venerable; his whole Look and Behaviour ſuch as gave thoſe who convers'd with him, occaſion to ſay of him, as the Woman of the *Prophet*, *I perceive that this is a holy Man of God.*

The whole Land has a great Loſs in his Death; for ſuch Perſons are the *Chariots and Horſemen* of a People, their Glory and Defence.

He married Mrs. *Mather*, the prudent and pious Relict of his Predeceſſor, and Daughter of the Reverend Mr. *Warham* of *Windſor*, who now ſurvives him; by whom he was bleſs'd with many Children, eight of which are living, two Sons, and Six Daughters. His Eldeſt Son, the Reverend Mr. *Anthony Stoddard*, is now the worthy Paſtor of the Church at *Woodberry*. His ſecond Son, Col. *John Stoddard*, is one of the preſent Members of His Majeſty's Council. And five of his Daughters are married to worthy Miniſters. The Rev. Mr. *Williams* of *Hatfield*, (one of his Sons in Law) preach'd

preach'd a Funeral Sermon for him, the day of his Interment.

He had the Satisfaction for ſome time before he died, to have his Grandſon, Mr. *Jonathan Edwards*, joined with him, to be the Collegue of his Age, and his Succeſſor at his Death; for whom we can't wiſh any thing better, than that the Mantle of *Elijah* may reſt upon *Eliſha*.

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